



Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby Cagle, MSW
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Reg Griffin

404-656-0239

reg.griffin@dec.al.ga.gov

Follow us on Twitter: @GADeptEarlyCare

**DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle and
Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K Susan Adams to visit China with
Confucius Institute at Kennesaw State University**

*Officials will study child care centers and discuss enhancements to
Chinese language program for Georgia's Pre-K students*

ATLANTA, Ga., (May 7, 2012) – Bobby Cagle, commissioner of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), and Susan Adams, assistant commissioner for Georgia Pre-K, will join a delegation from Georgia visiting China this summer. The trip, scheduled for Monday, June 4, 2012, through Friday, June 15, 2012, is sponsored by Kennesaw State University's Confucius Institute, a non-profit organization promoting the study of Chinese language, culture, ethics, and philosophy, and furthers the understanding of China today.

In 2009, DECAL joined forces with the Confucius Institute at KSU to offer a Chinese language program to Georgia's Pre-K students. The ground-breaking program provides daily instruction in the Mandarin language and exposes children to Chinese culture. The partnership is the only one of its kind in the world.

The trip will focus on expanding DECAL's existing partnership with the Confucius institute and China to provide highly qualified Mandarin teachers to Georgia's pre-k program; research and implement practical, new tools to enhance Georgia's dual language programs; meet with administrators at Yangzhou University and visit Pre-K centers to exchange ideas on Chinese language teaching and learning in China.

“We are living in a global economy and innovative programs like this prepare our state’s youngest learners for a bright future ahead,” said Commissioner Cagle. “We are the only Pre-K program in the country offering an in-depth language program like this. The latest brain research points to solid language, cognitive and social developmental advantages when a child learns multiple languages. Investing in our youngest learners is critical to the long-term economic growth and potential of Georgia.”

“The Confucius Institute provides highly qualified teachers who are fluent in English and Chinese with at least a master’s degree in teaching Chinese as a second language,” Adams explained. “We are now offering nine dual-language Mandarin classes at Pre-K programs in Dalton, Flowery Branch, Kennesaw, and Marietta.”

Celebrating its landmark 20th year this fall, Georgia’s Pre-K is a universal, voluntary program currently serving nearly 83,000 children across the state.

In October, 2011, Governor Nathan Deal led a state delegation visiting companies, business and government officials in China and South Korea. China is Georgia’s second-largest export market and around two dozen Chinese facilities operate in the state.

For live updates from the China trip, follow Commissioner Cagle on Twitter at @DECALCommish or @GADeptEarlyCare.

About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decal.ga.gov.

###